



# Growing



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## Chapter 1 by Andra Berilă

Tom was a good boy. He has been a good boy all his life. Everyone told him so: his parents, his sister, his uncle, his friends and colleagues and teachers. He was good and quiet. He didn't disturb anyone and he had always done what he was told. It's true he had moments when he stared at you with empty eyes. And it is also true that he liked to stay indoors and that he didn't talk to much.

But that wasn't a problem.

He's now the same good boy, with a small one-room apartment in the big city, with a well-paid job and a very strict routine. Some would say he is quite lonely, but he never complains about anything. He even goes out with his friends from time to time, drinks a small beer, smiles to the ladies and goes back home early. Like a good boy he is.

He never makes a mistake and never does something wrong. One would wonder if he ever has dreams or feelings or desires. But that didn't concern the people around him. They were pleased with Tom. Tom was a good boy.

Nobody would have guessed that Tom had something hidden. Something he was working on since he was little.

## Chapter 2 by Selena Raynee



Each night for exactly two hours from 2am till 4am Tom would go up to the roof of his apartment building and work his pride, his very powerful telescope. He always liked space,

finding solace in cold glitter of distant stars. He was very patient, studying one shiny dot after another on the black canvas, until like any other night he found it: his star. His own star.

Each night, for exactly two hours, he would look at his star and it would change its brightness ever so slightly that it was a miracle Tom could see it with his telescope.

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Changes in brightness formed a pattern, a pattern he swore to decipher someday.

The star talked to him each night and each day Tom's mind was preoccupied with signals he knew by heart.

Someday soon... yes, someday soon he'll be able to understand.

### Chapter 3 by intellikat



Far, far away, in a galaxy no earth person knew by name, there was a nearly identical girl named Mel. She was a good girl, too, and followed a curious and similar routine as Tom. Earth physicists would one day be able to explain how these two similar beings came to exist, living nearly identical and parallel lives so far from one another, but for the purposes of this story, I will simply say that there are more things in heaven than may be dreamt of in all our imaginings. Mel, too, had her own version of a telescope, and she pointed it every night toward a star in a galaxy far from her, yet very familiar to you and I. It was the sun of the Milky Way galaxy. Every night she observed the star in all its beauty, and imagined it to be speaking to her from a great distance.

And so it was, that on one particular night both Tom and Mel happened to be looking at one another's stars thinking the very same thoughts, and out of that strange alignment, something rather magical happened. The two somehow intertwined their thoughts, and found themselves in one another's mind, only for about a minute, but long enough to experience the life and thoughts of the other.

When he went to bed again at exactly 4:10am, his mind mulled over the experience. The next morning, as he worked from his office downtown, his mind was still fixed on one thing: how he seemed to understand the female mind better than he ever had before. He decided that he would go the bar that night as his usual schedule dictated, but that he would try something different this time. Instead of simply smiling to the ladies, he would try something that his intuition was telling him would work: he would actually engage them in conversation and find something unique about them that he could appreciate.

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